

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9739
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10008

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN CGEN UR US
SUBJECT: TEMPORARY DETENTION OF AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT

REF: MOSCOW 9952

1. CBS CORRESPONDENT REDMONT, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WEST GERMAN CAMERAMAN KURT HOEFLE, CALLED ON PRESS ATTACHE AT 16:50 LOCAL TIME JULY 12 TO DELIVER WRITTEN ACCOUNT OF INCIDENT THAT MORNING AT BEER HALL (REFTEL). ACCOUNT REAFFIRMS ESSENTIAL DETAILS CONVEYED REFTTEL, BUT IN ORAL DISCUSSION WITH PRESS ATTACHE BOTH REDMONT AND HOEFLE ADDED INFORMATION WHICH RASIES SUSPICIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE PROVOCATION.

2. REDMONT AND HOEFLE SAID THEY HAD FILMED FOR ABOUT 30-40 MINUTES OUTSIDE BEER HALL WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. SMALL CROWD OF BEER HALL PATRONS AND CERIOUS PASERS-BY HAD BEEN FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT. AS CORRESPONDENTS WERE PACKING UP EQUIPMENT, TWO OR MORE UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALS SET UPON THEM, ATTEMPTING TO SEIZE OR BREAK CAMERA. ONE KICKED HOEFLE. REDMONT AND HOEFLE BOTH ARE SURE THEIR ASSAILANTS WERE NOT RPT NOT PART OF ORIGINAL CROWD AROUND BEER HALL. REDMONT SAID TWO ASSAILANTS HE SAW WERE
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BOTH WELL-DRESSED (ONE WITH COAT AND TIE), UNLIKE PROLETARIAN-STYLE BEER DRINKERS.

3. CORRESPONDENTS ALSO STATE THAT PHYSICAL ASSAULT LASTED UPWARDS OF FIVE MINUTES (THIS MAY BE SLIGHT EXAGGERATION), DURING WHICH TIME A NON-COMMISSIONED MILITIAMAN CAME UPON SCENE BUT DID NOT RPT NOT INTERVENE UNTIL MILITIA OFFICERS AND

PLAINCLOTHESMEN ARRIVED A FEW MINUTES LATER.

4. REDMONT ADDS THAT ONE OF THE TWO ASSAILANTS HE IDENTIFIED RODE TO MILITIA STATION IN SEPARATE CAR AND WAITED IN HALL WHILE REDMONT AND HOEFLE WERE DETAINED APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES BEFORE BEING RELEASED.

5. THIS RELATION OF EVENTS STRONGLY SUGGESTS ATTACKERS WERE EITHER (A) IRATE CITIZENS OR DRUZHINNIKI GENUINELY PARANOID ABOUT FOREIGN CAMERA CREW SHOOTING FILM WHICH MIGHT CONCEIVABLY PORTRAY USSR IN NEGATIVE LIGHT (I.E. BEER HALL), OR (B) DELIVERATE PROVOCATEURS. IN EITHER CASE, APPARENT INITIAL RELUCTANCE OF MILITIANMAN TO PROTECT CORRESPONDENTS IS UNCONSCIONABLE.

6. WE BELIEVE PROTEST BOTH HERE AND IN WASHINGTON IS IN ORDER ON TWO GROUNDS: INTERFERENCE WITH LEGITIMATE WORK OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS, AND REFUSAL OF MILITAMAN TO PREVENT PHYSICAL ASSAULT ON US CITIZEN BY HOOLIGANS. UNLESS DEPARTMENT DISAGREES, WE PLAN DELIVER PROTEST ALONG THESE LINES AT FIRST OPPORTUNITY. FYI: REDMONT PLANS TO WRITE HIS OWN LETTER OF PROTEST TO MFA, AND HOEFLE CONTEMPLATING CONTACTING WEST GERMAN EMBASSY ON MATTER.

7. AP REUTHERS HAVE ALREADY CARRIED STORIES ON REDMONT'S DETENTION. IF QUERIED BY WESTERN PRESS, WE INTEND TO SAY THAT WE ARE AWARE OF CIRCUMSTANCES OF REDMONT'S DETENTION, THAT WE CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE CONVEYED DETAILS TO WASHINGTON, AND THAT WE DEPLORE ANY INTERFERENCE WITH LEGITIMATE FUNCTIONS OF AMERICAN NEWSMEN IN MOSCOW.
TOON

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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